

INTIFADA

September 2006

Justice is the seed, peace is the flower



INTIFADA

Students for Justice in Palestine

University of Auckland

August 2006

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Cover image: "flowerthrower" by Banksy

Check us out on the web:

www.ausjp.wordpress.com

SJP: Our agenda, our *raison d'être*

By Zaeem Baksh

The University of Auckland Students for Justice in Palestine

The people of Palestine, including young children are being murdered daily by the Israeli military and the Jewish squatters. The homes of the Palestinian families are bulldozed down in the middle of the night, and university buildings are destroyed. Palestinian families are routinely terrorised – their homes are occupied and their land confiscated. Apparently, we in New Zealand don't seem to care beyond the newspaper headlines; thus we continue, regrettably, to remain ill informed, on a healthy diet of disinformation and sleek official propaganda.

Mass media here in New Zealand, by and large, either fail to give adequate coverage to the horrific plight and pain of the Palestinians, or misconstrue the tragic situation and the Resistance movement so as to 'blame' the victim. Consequently, university students and academics, administrators, politicians and the public remain in the dark – misinformed.

The depth of ignorance is distressing, and the continual frustration caused by racism (under the guise of Zionism), the indiscriminate murder by Israeli military of the children in Palestine led a small group of us at Auckland University to form 'Students for Justice in Palestine' (SJP). We coincided the founding of SJP (14 May 2001) with a commemoration of Al-Naqba (The Catastrophe, 14 May 1948). The proverbial seed that was planted that day and that eventually sprouted into a frond that we now call SJP was the screening of the documentary film *Journey to the Occupied Land*. Armed with the writings of Professor Edward Said and others and by the remarkable resilience of the freedom fighters in Palestine, our student members are encouraged that expressions of support from a wide range of university clubs, students, staff and community members are growing.

SJP welcomes anyone who supports our aims and objectives. It is our aim to disseminate information, enlightening students and community members of the sufferings of the Palestinian people, of their struggles for liberation, whilst attempting to give voice to the Palestinian aspirations for Justice and Equality in Palestine. In this regard we aim to disseminate information on Palestine – the people, their history and their heroic struggles for freedom.

Students for Justice in Palestine also attempts to promote Palestinian culture in the form of literature, art, music and dance and cuisine. SJP organizes educational and cultural events and engages in social activities from time to time to raise funds to achieve our aims and objectives. We have presented talks to schools in the Auckland area and plan to develop further relations with community organizations. SJP screens documentaries on the struggles of the Palestinians, their resistance against the colonialist oppressor. SJP invites speakers who support justice in Palestine and who promote the aspirations of the Palestinians – Liberty in the ancient Land of Palestine.

At the end of the day SJP wishes to see the triumph of the Palestinian people, in their struggles to control their own destiny in their homeland – Palestine. SJP is of the belief that resistance is the inalienable right of the people who are oppressed. And we in SJP, through our work, intend to have the student community (and others) recognise this fact. We believe that peace can only be achieved in Palestine (or anywhere) if JUSTICE is established first. This condition is an imperative. If there is no justice, there can never be any peace. Justice is the seed, and peace the frond, the flower, the fruit that sprout from that seed.

We hold the view that oppression anywhere is oppression everywhere, and that the occupation of Palestine by the military of the Nazi-like Israeli government is intolerable and the confiscation of Palestinian land by the racist 'Jewish squatters' is reprehensible.

The Palestinian Resistance (Intifada) to Israeli oppression and racism, put in a universal context, is incisively articulated by Malcolm X:

Racism is a human problem and a crime that is absolutely so ghastly that a person who is fighting racism is well within his or her rights to fight against it by any means necessary.

We at SJP also intend to raise awareness among students by making available information regarding the United Nations Resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention, which require Israel's government to end the occupation of Palestine and to cease confiscation of land.

Regarding the indigenous people of Palestine, next time you get confronted by racist supporters of Israel/Jewish government quote to them the

following (from Ilene Beatty, Arab and the Jew in the Land of Canaan):

...who, then, has the legal right to Palestine? There is one people, almost unmentioned, ignored, and practically forgotten. But they must be named and considered, for they are the most important of all – the native Palestinians themselves. The Canaanites were first. And when we speak of Palestinians or of the Arab population, we bear in mind their Canaanite origin.

We in Aotearoa New Zealand recall with some pride our parents' protests against the war in Vietnam, and with equal pride we remember our elder sisters and brothers who protested against the racist apartheid system in South Africa. Now it is our turn! – to protest against the Israeli military occupation of Palestine and the horrific carnage being committed by the racist government of Israel.

Students for Justice in Palestine intends to build on our success and for the year 2006 intends to be more vigorously involved in educating and enlightening student communities, and thereby giving 'voice' to the aspirations of the Palestinian people. Already the seed we planted at Auckland University has sent roots to Auckland University of Technology, to Waikato University and to Wellington. Insha-allah other universities too will soon show signs of SJP germinating in their respective campus. We will do our best to plant SJP seeds there – your helping hand will assist.

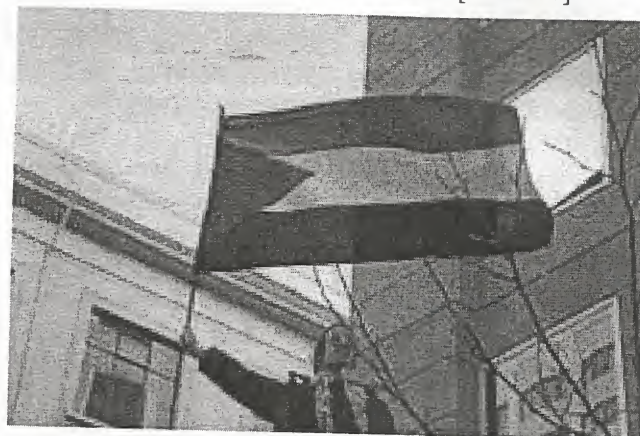
Clearly, mass media here in New Zealand as else where, driven by greater profit margins, cannot be relied upon to speak for truth and justice. A student for Justice in Palestine is proud to wave its banner, proclaiming, "Justice is the seed, peace the flower". Without justice, we believe, there can never be peace. Moreover, we ascribe to the principle:

"When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty".

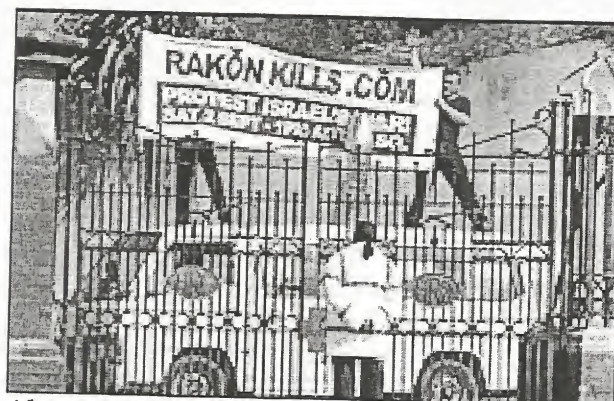
Let's go do our duty!



Above: "Stop the Massacres in Lebanon" Protest on Queen St en route to British consulate [22/07/06]



Above: Simon Oosterman lowers the US flag to half-mast and holds the Palestinian flag aloft over the US consulate. [22/07/06]



Above: "Rakon, Israel, USA! How many kids did you kill today?" SJP lead a protest outside Rakons first shareholder AGM. Around fifteen protestors picketed the meeting. [01/09/06]

Aotearoa Jews For Justice Speaks Out Against Israel

Aotearoa Jews For Justice (AJFJ) stands in solidarity with the Lebanese and Palestinian people suffering at the hands of the Israeli army. We also stand with those Israelis who are challenging the illegal and war-mongering actions of the Israeli state in Palestine and now in Lebanon.

We are part of a growing global movement of Jews who feel that it is our duty to oppose the atrocities being committed by the Israeli government in our name. Israel has never and will never represent us.

We draw from a long tradition of Jews who have campaigned for social justice and against racism and colonialism regardless of where it has occurred. To find out more: www.aotearojewsforjustice.org
AJFJ is a group of Jews in New Zealand that support the Palestinian struggle for self-determination.

AL-NAKBA

By Sahar Ghumkhor

On May 14th, while the rest of us continued with our mundane activities, Palestinians and their supporters worldwide remembered the day Palestinians were denied their existence as a people. Al Nakba, meaning 'disaster' in Arabic marks the day the Middle East was inflicted with a wound that refuses to heal till this very day-the birth of Israel.

Prior to the establishment of Israel in 1948, evidence of Arab presence in the area is observed in Ottoman accounts in 1517 where 955 Palestinian villages and towns were recorded. In addition, under the British mandate, 1000 villages and towns were also recorded. So it's safe to say, Palestine was not uninhabited at the time.

Epitomising the arrogance of the new settlers, the Zionist maxim "a land without people, a people without land" blatantly ignored the historical record of Arab existence. It reflected on the colonial manifestation of the time, embodied in the Balfour declaration. The British and the new settlers were ready to toy with lives of colonised people. Balfour himself declared: "we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country [who are] totally barbarous, underdeveloped black tribes".

While the Zionist, European, spoke the language of the civilised, understood business and politics, and came from an influential background earned him/herself the right of being more human. This dehumanisation process fed the indispensability of the Palestinians and made the subjugation of 'the other' acceptable.

Israelis and their supporters will shamelessly respond defending the right for Israel to exist in the circumstances that it did. Claiming if the Arabs accepted resolution 181, they would have had their own state by now. The Arabs rejected the plan on offer with good reason. The partition of Palestine was unfair and illegal because it failed to consult the majority of the Palestinians estimated at that time at 90% of the total population of Palestine. The resolution lacked justice and equality because it gave the Jewish minority about 56% of the land (when they legally owned only 6%) most of which was located at the fertile coastal areas and 43% to the indigenous Palestinian majority, land lying in rugged

mountainous areas. The Palestinians understandably rejected the incongruous offer and saw it nothing more than an affront on their sovereignty and ownership of the land they have cultivated and lived on for centuries.

The UN offer exacerbated further tensions between both sides and culminated in the Israeli-Arab war. Three-quarters of historic Palestine was conquered in 1948 by Israeli forces like the Haganah, Stern and Irgun gangs who later merged to become the IDF. The Zionists were realistic enough to recognise the disproportion in population and knew they needed to get rid of a good percentage of the Arab population. Therefore, they adopted military doctrines like Plan D to 'pacify' Palestinian villages and towns, to get control of the community or driving them out by destroying their villages. This allowed them to expel the Arab population and maximise on as much land as possible for the new state. Later, historical accounts of this would deceptively put the blame on Arab fear mongering that resulted in Palestinians leaving en masse. On the contrary anyone who fled was actually threatened with severe punishment. As for the broadcasts by Arab radio stations allegedly calling on people to flee, a detailed listening to recordings of their programmes of that period shows that the claims were invented for pure propaganda. This was done so Israel wouldn't look like the bad guy, and shirk responsibility towards the refugees.

From British mandate land, direct result of British policy, or British collusion, 675 Palestinian towns and villages were seized and their populations removed or massacred to make way for Jewish settlers. Massacres in Dier Yassin, where 254 people were slaughtered utter the mere callousness of the new settlers. Israeli villages were therefore built over Arab villages. Over 800,000 Palestinians were forced to flee to nearby Arab states. At the end, Ben Gurion the influential Israeli general unilaterally declared the establishment of the new Jewish state- with 21% land in addition to the land offered them in the partition. The UN as well as the international community eventually recognised the state showing their approval with a 'might is right' strategy. Palestinians who lived in the conquered areas suddenly found themselves refugees till this day. Like those ones who were expelled, both were subject to exile in different ways. Today, it is safe to say, there is no place in Israel where it did not once have an Arab population.

For the Palestinians, what were left were tragic memories and their society eradicated.

One cannot escape the chilling irony of the refugees of Europe establishing a new nation simultaneously creating a new group of refugees.

Today, Israel is the only "democratic" state in the world that doesn't cater for all its citizens. Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first President, promise in 1921 that "Palestine will be as Jewish as England is English" rings true. Only Jews are endowed with the privileges of full-citizenship rights. Governed by the law of return alone, any Jew can 'return' and become a citizen, and benefit from over 90% of apparent Jewish land. This privilege has been denied of the 5.5 million Palestinians still living in exile since 1948.

Al Nakba seems to be too far back in the dark pages of history for most. It has been purposely been avoided by Israel and the West, and this avoidance has consequently nourished a continuous war declared in 1948. But the victims of historical injustices never forget, as colonisation of the third world reminds us; they live it everyday. Al Nakba has followed them in occupation, in the surrounding refugee camps - whose nearby location has a desperate presence of loss and servitude, in the discrimination that they feel in their adopted 'homes' in Arab states, and for those in the western Diaspora, -painfully being subjected to a demonisation of their history. Al Nakba can never be invisible.

To Palestinians, it represents the loss of livelihood, nationality, identity, and above all the loss of their home. For the European Jew, Al-Nakba stands for independence, and the defeat of the enemy. It is the triumph over the tragedy of the holocaust, and where the new Jewish state will protect the survivors and future generations to come. Never again, they say. For the West, Al-Nakba represents liberalism surviving in a region of Arab and Muslim fanaticism. Israel's presence is therefore seen to them as a defiance of everything the Middle East represents.

Al-Nakba lives with every day Israel exists. With everyday a Palestinian is deemed irrelevant. With everyday a Palestinian is deprived of basic human rights, a right to live a dignified existence and the continual dispossession of the indigenous people of Palestine.

However, Al Nakba has had other surprising impacts. It has born Palestinian perseverance and

an avid nationalism that grows with every tragedy. It has shaped a passion to fight for the right to exist. Through calamity, Palestinians have united and strengthened and survived; preserving and protecting their tradition in exile. Finally, they refuse to disappear, and are a shameful reminder of how the tragic history of the Jews have had no lessons to be learnt.



Suad Amiry's entries in the Ramallah diaries help us to understand the Palestinian psyche since 1948, when she responds to an Israeli soldier at a checkpoint:

"I am neither deaf nor blind nor mute, young man. Like the rest of us, I have learnt how to act deaf, behave blind, pretend to be mute every time I encounter one of you in our towns, our streets, our houses, our living rooms, or even our bedrooms".

The occupation has encroached on Palestinian lives with convinced arrogance, assuming like it did their land, it owns every one of them. Mentally, spiritually, and physically have Palestinians been violated, but impressively they have responded with fortitude and patience. However, when injustices befallen them prove to be too much and they finally do decide to speak out, they're consequently faced with a wall of indifference and denigration. Like they haven't put up with enough as it is.



Above: 1948 Palestinian refugees still holding onto keys and documents for the homes they were forced to flee during the war.

Keith Locke MP
Green Foreign Affairs

Sometimes, when I support Palestinian rights, I am accused of not being "even-handed" in the Israel/Palestine dispute.

But what does "even-handed" mean when the situation on the ground is hardly "even". There is only one occupying power (Israeli) and only one occupied people (the Palestinians).

But, say Israel and other Western powers, the new Hamas government doesn't accept Israel's "right to exist"

This expression, "right to exist" is peculiar and rather confusing.

It has connotations of Hamas wanting to expel Jewish people from Israel, but few in Hamas seem to hold that view.

Does it mean Hamas wants an Islamic state in Israel/Palestine? Surely people are entitled to argue for what every form of state they want: a Jewish state, an Islamic state, or two states (Israel and Palestine). Today many progressive Israeli Jews reject the two state solution as unworkable, because the Israeli government's idea of Palestine is an patchwork Bantustan, largely enclosed within Israel. These progressive Jews favour a democratic secular state covering Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. Of course, a secular, state would be more in tune with what we have in New Zealand.

But, the critics say, Hamas is not just talking of an Islamic state, but using force to achieve it. But before we get on to Hamas, don't we have to recognise that Israel is unashamedly using its military might to enforce its version of a two state solution. Hamas has been militarily inactive since the elections, for which it deserves some credit – particularly when Israel and Islamic Jihad are engaged in significant armed action, with many of the casualties being innocent Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

Surely, Hamas needs rewards, not punishments, for so far taking a more peaceful path.

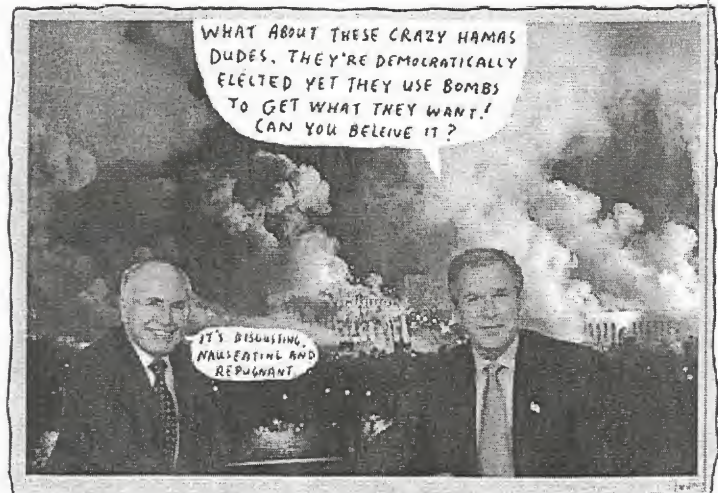
Yet the response of Western countries has been to cancel their aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority. Here we had one of the few democratic elections in the Middle East and because the EU and US didn't like the outcome they have

punished the Palestinian population, pushing it into even more abject poverty.

New Zealand should speak out, saying this is not the way to a just peace. Instead the rich Western countries should be helping the Palestinian people and listening to the political solutions they are offering.



Above: Keith Locke at the protest against the assault on Lebanon and Gaza. [22/07/06]



Above: Leaders of the 'free world' remind us what it takes to be considered upholding democratic values.

On 29 August 2006 Keith Locke moved the following motion in parliament. It passed unanimously:

That this House supports the right of parliamentarians to freely pursue their duties;

notes the opposition of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament to Israel's arrest of more than 20 members of the Palestinian parliament;

and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the Palestinian Speaker Abdelaziz El-Dweik, the Deputy Prime Minister Naser al-Shaer, and the other arrested Ministers and members of the Palestinian Parliament.

Auckland University should cut its exchange program with Israel

By Omar Hamed

Auckland University Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) began a campaign on Thursday the 3rd of August to call on the University of Auckland to cut its student exchange program with Technion, the Israeli Institute of Technology.

The campaign is in support of the over 170 Palestinian political parties, unions and other organization including the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions who issued a call in July 2005 for a global campaign of boycotts and divestment against the brutal policies of the Israeli occupation and the separation wall.

The campaign is designed to educate students and faculty about the human rights abuses and disregard of international law that the state of Israel is committing in south Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories.

SJP are calling for a termination of the student exchange program as a way of applying moral and political pressure on the inhumane policies of Israel. The war crimes being committed by Israel in Lebanon and Palestine yesterday, today and tomorrow mean we can not sit idly by as innocent people are turned into corpses by the Israeli war machine.

On 30 July, during the Israeli attack on Lebanon, Israeli airstrikes hit an apartment building in Qana. It has been confirmed by the Lebanese Red Cross that at least 28 people were killed, 16 of which were children. This attack provoked the campaign but it is also a channeling of our grief and anger over the many thousands more innocent Palestinians and Lebanese who would still be alive today if Israel abided by international law, United Nations resolutions and the Geneva Conventions. Israel has proved to the world that it is a rogue nation and a law unto itself. For this reason we must bring the full force of our moral condemnation against its barbaric actions.

SJP was inspired to do this action by the largest Canadian labor union the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) who on May 27, 2006 decided to "Support the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law, including the right of

Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194."



Above: Israeli soldiers assaulting a terrified Palestinian child. Potential suicide bomber? Wet jeans say otherwise.

After CUPE was accused of anti-Semitism, there was an outpouring of support from Jewish and Israeli peace activists with hundreds signing petitions in support of CUPE. The group Israeli seekers of Peace and Justice said to CUPE that they "honour your courageous initiative, and fervently hope that it will set an example for many others to follow."



Above: Protestors outside the U.S. consulate acknowledge America's responsibility in perpetuating the occupation of Palestine. US vetoes UN resolutions in support of human rights while continuing to supply Israel with the tanks and missiles it needs to continue its war on Palestine. [22/07/06]

We at Students for Justice in Palestine have taken the advice of the Israeli anti-war movement and Palestinian civil society to heart and will use tactics that make the world's attention focus on the brutal occupation of Palestine until there is a peace with justice in Palestine.

Twenty five years after the Springbok Tour shook New Zealand join us in ending Israeli apartheid: studentsforjusticeinpalestine@gmail.com

Fooled By Doaa El-Emary

You want me not to speak
To just watch and weep
To hide all my anger
And lock away my fear

You want me to be silent
While watching all the violence
While children die in millions
To shut tight my eyelids

You want me not to hear
Those deadly screams of pain
To instead listen to music
To deafen my ears from shame

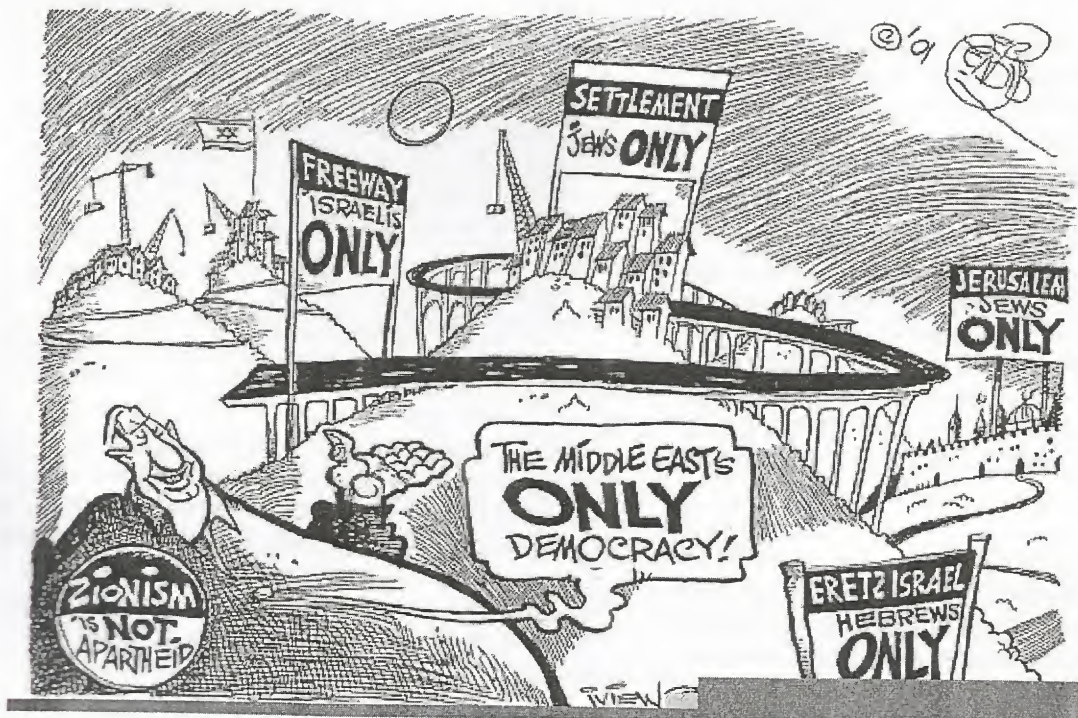
You expect me to be blind
To shut away all the cries
To hide behind a curtain
And a world full of lies

Never will I accept
This injustice and oppression
Never will I live
With greed and aggression

Through shame and guilt I breathe
Their silent cries and fears
And forever and everyday
I'll hear their groans and pleas



Above: Banksy's 'Escapism'. Painted on the separation wall.



Harmeet Sooden interviewed by Sahar Ghumkhor

Sahar Ghumkhor: Upon arrival in Baghdad, what was your first impression of the city?

Harmeet Sooden: In Amman, Jordan, on the way to Baghdad, I met a little 3-year old girl Alaa' – she ran up to me and gave me a big hug, just like my niece. Except she couldn't really see me – her face and legs were peppered with micro-fragments of shrapnel.

In May of 2005, her older brothers, aged 4 and 5, were killed when a tank shell or rocket fired by the US military hit their home in the city of Al Qa'im in Iraq near the Syrian border. Three of her cousins were also killed. Alaa' and about 8 others, mostly children, were injured. Her mother lost an eye. They were having a party.

Alaa's father asked her to lift up her shirt. She complied obediently to reveal a large scar and hernia resulting from a crudely treated shrapnel wound. He turned to me and said: "Is this democracy?"

I've just heard from Alan Pogue, from Veterans for Peace. He's been trying to get the family to the US for treatment. He says that when her father returned home from work on the day of the incident, Alaa's condition was so poor that a doctor on the scene had prioritised treating the other wounded children instead of Alaa'. Her father refused to give up and drove her for a couple of hours to get medical help. The doctor he found just sewed her intestines back together to placate the father. In Alan's words: "That Alaa' lived actually is a miracle."

This is just the story of one Iraqi refugee out of hundreds of thousands that have fled into Jordan over the past few decades, escaping one horror or another. I have relatives that have been living in refugee camps since 1947 in Kashmir. It's not a pleasant experience.

We were greeted by the presence of blue-uniformed Gurkha guards at the Baghdad International Airport reminiscent of the depravity of the British

Empire in India that my grandparents used to describe to me.

There were passengers at immigration control. Some of them were security contractors – highly paid mercenaries. Quite a few New Zealand soldiers have gone to Iraq as mercenaries. There were second-hand American Bradley vehicles lining the notorious Airport Road, each sporting a freshly painted Iraqi flag in an apparent display of Iraqi sovereignty; and kids squatting in a looted department store. All this had a veneer of normalcy in a city of blast walls.

Like Norman [Kember], I think it's the people of Iraq we should be listening to. If we care to look that information is readily available.



Above: Tape of Harmeet Sooden and fellow CPTers captured in Iraq, aired on AlJazeera.

SG: You were in Iraq for only a short time before you were kidnapped. What did you witness amongst ordinary Iraqis?

HS: Well, being captives did not prevent us from being witnesses.

We, like the Iraqi people, suffered from lack of food, an inadequate supply of electricity and shortage of kerosene during the cold winter. We actually went to the power generating facility in Al Dura to interview managers and employees before the kidnapping. The power plant was severely damaged in 1991 by American bombing – a war crime. Baghdad's power infrastructure has not been operating at full capacity since then because of the US/UK-initiated UN sanctions. This stopped spare parts for public utilities and medical supplies reaching the people of Iraq for 12 years.

Much of the construction in Iraq has been US military facilities, concrete blast walls and oil extraction facilities. This is not really helpful to civilian populace. One reason the US has for the construction and reconstruction is to serve US companies, like Bechtel, which has been given a contract to rehabilitate the Al Dura power plant. Essentially, this is a way to relocate American tax dollars to the private sector – the US public footing the bill. It's an assault on the American people. Another reason is for the US to be able to sell its client government to the Iraqi people. This has not worked, so far, because of the extremely insecure environment of occupied Iraq. So the US's help is basically reduced to forcing compliance by violence.

The occupation is also economic in character, forcing the client government to sell off state-owned assets to privateers, easing legislation governing corporate behaviour and impoverishing the people as their resources flow out of the country.

Many Iraqis I spoke with believed the United States had invaded their country for its oil. Certainly, this is the first time the US has had troops in the centre of the foremost energy-producing region in the world, giving it greater control over other economies like the EU and China.



Above: Another innocent victim of an illegal war.

A soldier in the Iraqi National Guard quit when his son was born. He said it was too dangerous. Struggling for an income, he became a driver for CPT [Christian Peacemaker Teams].

There's a women's human rights group we went to visit called Iraqi Al-Amal. They have mobile clinics

that travel throughout the country providing medical services as well as healthcare education to mainly women and children – groups that are always the first to suffer in war. They sponsor an income-generating programme for widows and legal seminars on women's rights amongst other things. So the people are mobilizing themselves, as there is limited help from state agencies. The children, there that day, put on a marvellous play for us about racism in the contemporary United States.

An Iraqi priest we visited before the kidnapping said: "Iraq's recovery may take ten years or more. But we can't wait until the tragedy is over to work, laugh, and hope."

SG: News reports have implied you are a delusional Christian missionary. What is your relationship with Christian Peacemaker Teams and your reasons for going to Iraq with them?

HS: Friends and family don't consider me a Christian although I do have the confidence to identify myself as such if I wish. Some consider me a Sikh, some an atheist; others prefer to think of me as possessing secular values.

Anyway, words like "delusional Christian missionary" are a form of ignorance, having the effect of ridiculing and dismissing the work of organisations like CPT without understanding their work. In this instance, my religious identity is irrelevant.

First of all, I'm not a member of CPT. I joined a short-term delegation to Iraq. CPT's delegations have proven to be an extremely effective tool in raising awareness in the West of the reality of occupation. I wished to acquire a greater understanding of the nature of the conflict and to learn various non-violent conflict resolution techniques. My role was to bear witness to the suffering of Iraqi people living under a harsh military occupation, and to provide this narrative, based on humanitarian interpretations of events, to a wider audience and as a Westerner to offer a sense of solidarity to the Iraqi people and human rights groups. CPT felt I had the required training and experience.

I was working as a software engineer for Osmar International, a US-owned company based in Auckland that produces simulation and training

equipment for "defence" forces. Osmar had been awarded a contract to supply the Israeli Defence Force. Shortly after I resigned, an NZ peace organisation revealed that it had received leaked documents showing that although the NZ government had denied Osmar an export permit, Osmar, undeterred, tried to fulfil the contract by electronically transferring the completed design to the US for manufacturing. This exposure forced a rather reluctant NZ government to open an investigation. The NZ government's final decision was that there was no case to answer and therefore no further action would be taken. No further explanation was given. There were student demonstrations outside Osmar's facilities. Sadly, the New Zealand government continues to support companies like Osmar and weapons or weapons-related research and production. So, that's another motivation for me.

You know, my great-grandfather was a soldier in the British Indian army. He was killed in Basra in 1916. Now a century later not much has changed.

SG: Many would criticise Christian groups like CPT for exploiting the suffering of others – in this case the Muslim world – by taking advantage of a vulnerable environment and spreading Christianity. Could you comment on that?

HS: Christianity informs the internal structure of CPT drawing upon centuries of Mennonite, Brethren and Quaker peacemaking tradition. Proselytizing is strictly beyond CPT's mandate: aside from being potentially immoral, it would render CPT's work virtually impossible.

CPT's Iraqi working partners and welcoming bodies, know that CPT doesn't evangelise nor provide any material humanitarian aid. It works ecumenically with other faiths. CPT assisted in the creation and training of the Muslim Peacemaker Teams a predominantly Shi'a group based in Karbala. CPT joined MPT in a carefully planned programme cleaning the streets of the largely Sunni city of Fallujah, after it was devastated by US forces in November 2004.

CPT went to Iraq with the approval of the Iraqi government in 2002 before the US invasion. At the time CPT supported the UN Weapons Inspection Program as a means to avert war and also exposed the injustice and deaths resulting from UN

economic sanctions – initiated by the US and UK. UNICEF estimates that at least 500,000 children under the age of 5 died as a result.

CPT remained with the Iraqi people during the so-called "shock and awe" campaign of March 2003. In the aftermath of bombing, CPT documented and publicised the detrimental effects of the invasion on the civilian population.

CPT works with and advocates for families of people detained by the US military and collects testimonies of detainee abuse. In January 2004, CPT released a report documenting the systematic abuse of Iraqi prisoners, which was ignored until the photographs of Abu Ghraib prisoners brought international attention to the issue. Lately, CPT had begun to work on prisoner abuse cases in prisons run by the Ministry of the Interior. Detainee work also entails accompanying detainee families to the Green Zone, the Iraqi Assistance Centre and secure areas like Iraqi Ministries – as internationals CPT members may have access to facilities and resources that Iraqis may not.

CPT connects Iraqi groups committed to non-violence to each other. This is where short-term delegations come in. CPT also trains them and, of course, learns from them. And it builds relationships between local and international human rights groups.

The Palestinian community in Baghdad is subject to intense harassment by Iraqi government militias. The US government basically did nothing. Last year, CPT managed to get some Palestinian families to the Syrian border and they were eventually accepted into Syria as refugees.

CPT also met regularly with the staff at the Baghdad central morgue. In late 2005, for unknown reasons their staff stopped supplying information. At the time about 50 bodies, showing signs of death by violence, were arriving every day – that's not including military-related deaths. The daily death toll now is much higher.

More recently, CPT was documenting cases of torture by the Ministry of Interior. Some survivors have indicated US personnel were present during the incarceration and interrogations, which included electrocution of sensitive body parts and beating with plastic pipes.

Incidentally, the historic Iraqi Christian community is rapidly decreasing in size as a direct result of the conditions in their country. I think people should realise that CPT is a part of, in fact a tiny part of, a brave Iraqi non-violent movement.

SG: Based on the reports made by CPT, how extensive is the problem of the coalition violating the civil liberties of Iraq? How accurate is the impression we have here in the West?

HS: The "occupation" includes the actions of the multinational forces, the client government, and the insurgents. And one thing I'd like to make clear is that the crimes that stem from the occupation are the responsibility of the occupiers. That's common sense.

Yes, as I mentioned before, I think the CPT's projects in Iraq illustrate some of the problems people in Iraq have.

The impression we are getting in the West does not reflect the reality of the situation in Iraq. Western media is generally confined to the safety of the Green Zone and other fortified compounds and doesn't get to see the suffering of the ordinary Iraqis but CPT is part of the local community living outside the Green Zone. Let's just take New Zealand, specifically New Zealand media's message, which is basically gleaned from international media outlets. There are a few central themes. One is racism. The other is Islamophobia. There's a business-orientated bias. What opinions we adopt are mostly up to us.



Above: American soldier dutifully protects an Iraqi civilian.

SG: In your press release you mentioned the complicity of the NZ government in Iraq. How

influential a role have the NZ government played in Iraq and Afghanistan?

HS: In 2003, the New Zealand government deployed "engineers," a euphemism for army engineers, to Iraq under the direct control of British occupying forces. The NZ troops were mainly there to construct military facilities and repair military equipment – much like the British imperialists who commissioned the building of railways in British India (having destroyed indigenous industries), not for the local populace, but to transport goods and troops for the benefit of the British economy. The New Zealand Herald was lauding NZ's achievement in criminal and undemocratic behaviour.

I don't think these occupying forces particularly required the handful of NZ troops from a logistical point of view. Under the guise of helping Iraqis, NZ lent political support and an air of legitimacy to the crimes of the Anglo-American occupation and Coalition Provisional Authority (to which it donated token amounts of money.) There are potentially substantial opportunities for New Zealand business in the region and elsewhere and trade agreements to preserve and foster.

Reasons for New Zealand's intervention in Afghanistan are similar.

The US demanded that the Taliban government (which grew out of US-financed anti-Soviet forces) hand over the people it suspected were involved in the destruction of the World Trade Centre otherwise it would bomb the Afghan people. The Taliban agreed to hand over the suspects to a third party for trial, an offer that was rejected by the US. It was only some time after the bombing began that the decision to overthrow the Taliban was announced. Anti-Taliban forces said the invasion was undermining their own efforts to overthrow the Taliban from within the country. The war planners went ahead with the attack on Afghanistan with the knowledge, based on their own assessments, that millions of people would be put at risk of starvation.

The New Zealand SAS has been operating there (intermittently) in a combat role since 2001 under US command. We didn't know for weeks. Further deployments are still shrouded in secrecy. There are also troops participating in "provincial reconstruction teams." The laws of war and

international humanitarian law bind NATO and the US, the primary sources of violence in the area. The NZ government has therefore, again, demonstrated its contempt for international law and human rights in general.

The Afghan people should decide what form their future should take. Not what I want, certainly not what US government or their Afghan subordinates want.

SG: You also claimed a ransom was paid to secure your release. Could you comment on that?

HS: I didn't claim or believe that a ransom had been paid. That was asserted, falsely and knowingly, by NZ media and the BBC in their headlines, and replicated by others. What I actually said, as reported in the body of the same articles at the time, was that a negotiated settlement was "likely or highly probable" but I consistently said that I had no evidence. The official Canadian government position is that no ransom was paid. Furthermore, such irresponsible journalism, making a big deal of the issue of ransoms, could have increased the risk of kidnapping for other aid workers.

My position is that payment of ransom was one of the many possibilities. Likewise, I have no evidence or proof that we were rescued. A negotiated release can take the form of a "rescue." The episode of ransom is fairly insignificant in this story. The key point I wanted to make was that the governments as institutions aren't moral agents and don't always behave ethically.

I knew that being kidnapped could possibly lead to deaths, to military involvement or ransoms. There were precedents. After all it's currently a war zone. My position before I went into Iraq was clear: I did not want force or public funds (that could be better used elsewhere) to be used for my sake. My wishes were overruled – in the end I had no choice in the matter.

SG: Paul Buchanan from the Political Studies Department claims in his article "Paying for the rescue of Western Martyrs" you and your colleagues suffer from the same 'Martyr complex' that of 'Islamic Jihadists and Iraqi resistance fighters'. What is your response to those who believe you put yourself and others who helped in your release in harms way?

HS: I will comment, but with reluctance, only because Mr. Buchanan's misconceptions are common misconceptions.

From what I remember, he wrote that we found ourselves in a predicament because we have psychological problems and we're naïve enough to confuse the US occupation of Iraq with the Israeli occupation of Palestine. And that legislation should be enacted that would require survivors, who ignore expert advice, to reimburse the government for costs associated with rescues to deter mercenaries, thrill-seekers and manic peace activists, lest they be infected by our example.

Pop psychology terms such as "martyr complex" are like any cultural trend: they appear and disappear and don't require much thought. I'd rather live and I don't like conflict zones. It can't be said that fire-fighters want to be martyrs solely on the basis of their profession. What about soldiers? Mr. Buchanan believes the "Stockholm syndrome" doesn't apply in our case, because we were "sympathetic" to our kidnappers long before our capture. Yes, in a way as sympathetic as we are to US soldiers suffering in Iraq. But again, he employs "psychology" to draw parallels between resistance fighters and us. Such exercises carry no information.

CPT and its working partners are in a very good position to assess the conditions in Iraq, simply because the conditions are affecting them directly. The specific work of any CPT project, like Columbia, Palestine or Iraq, varies according to the nature of the conflict and the needs of the community in question. The thing all have in common is gross human rights violations.

Mr. Buchanan suggests we pay for the costs incurred by governments as a result of our captivity. That principle must also apply to governments for their crimes – the US government should pay due reparations to the Iraqi people (although that could never replace what they have lost) and compensation to US soldiers and aid workers. There are plenty of sources of funding such as war profiteers. The US, Coalition Provisional Authority and the Iraqi interim government sanctioned CPT's presence in Iraq.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences estimates that over 10 years, the war could cost as much as \$2 trillion. The October 2004 Lancet report estimated 100,000 excess deaths since the US

invasion in 2003. Violence accounted for most of these excess deaths and air strikes from coalition forces accounted for most violent deaths and most individuals reportedly killed by coalition forces were women and children.

You can see now how the use of language serves to distract us from the real issues at hand. We've already spent valuable time talking about diversionary trivialities. I find the article, by an academic of Mr. Buchanan's calibre, to be irresponsible. I'm not sure what else to say.

CPT was already in Iraq before 2003 and relatively safe under the vicious Saddam regime. But foreign soldiers are under continuous threat of harm simply by virtue of being present in Iraq – that too on the basis of lies. These soldiers have my sympathy. I want them to be home and safe with their families.

SG: There were claims made by those who helped in your release that you and your colleagues showed little gratitude. Could you clarify this?

HS: CPT and the captives were vilified by sectors of the media, public and various officials by being called naïve, foolish, ungrateful, ineffective, uncooperative, inexperienced, untrained and so on.

It doesn't take much effort to expose such things as false. I've already talked about the CPT's work. In particular, I was astonished to read that Norman was accused of "not thanking the troops." I also read that photos on the walls of the SAS compound in the Green Zone depict otherwise. I, also, did actually thank the troops in person in the same way I would've thanked an equally brave and courteous Baghdadi taxi driver for escorting us to the Green Zone. We wouldn't have been kidnapped in Iraq – we wouldn't even be in Iraq – if not for the actions of these soldiers' employers.

We cooperated and continue to cooperate with British and Canadian authorities to promote human rights and conflict resolution. Governments are also CPT's working partners.

Again, such disparaging remarks have the effect of drawing one's attention away from the real issues at hand. The UNAMI [United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq] Chief of the Human Rights Office and the Deputy Head of the Red Cross Iraq Delegation both acknowledged the important and valuable role CPT plays.

SG: During your capture, what kind of insight did you have on the nature of the insurgency in Iraq?

HS: In our situation, not much beyond speculation, I'm afraid. We only interacted with low-level members of the group. The authorities have not been very forthcoming in terms of sharing information. What I've seen in the media so far is largely unsubstantiated. In time, research will reveal more. Our captors were, of course criminals, having abducted us, but it is likely that they were also insurgents and members of the armed resistance.

What's referred to the insurgency or armed resistance is complex but it was formed in reaction to the occupation. The background of our immediate guards, who said they were Sunnis from Fallujah, illustrates why. One asked me: "What would you do if Canada was invaded by the Americans? And your family killed? Your home destroyed? Your livelihood taken away?" I replied, "I don't know," because I have the luxury of a non-violent approach.

Our immediate guards and their handler were adamant that they were not related to the so-called "Jihadi" groups and would not hand us over to them. They emphatically told us that they didn't see "Zarqawi" as representing their interests. They claimed they had kidnapped us to raise funds to fight the insurgency, to purchase arms, to pay their fighters and so on. They used the same pejorative words to describe Bush and Saddam. They said they would not be treating us relatively well if we had not been "men of peace". They murdered Tom, an American national, which shows they are as ruthless as the US forces whose widespread atrocities are only now coming to light – although the means of violence available to the US is vastly greater.

But please note: there's a very large non-violent resistance, which is very powerful. It forced the occupiers to allow elections, it's not much but it now means that the people have a little more say in the running of their country. This is what CPT is trying to support.

In a recent interview, Jim [Loney] said he eventually came to see our captors "as good people who had been infected with a toxic kind of religion." I feel that shrewd observation should be extended to our own nationalistic societies.

SG: John Pilger says that the conflict should not be referred to as 'sectarian violence' but believes that the 'Salvador Option' has been evoked. Is this a reasonable assertion?

HS: "Sectarian violence" is an interesting phrase. It tends to disguise the fundamental causes of the violence by pandering the racist assumption that Iraqis are mindless killers. And it overlooks the fact that the cause of current ethnic and sectarian tensions has roots in the creation of the modern nation-state of Iraq by the British, exacerbated by Western-supported regimes and especially the US-led Gulf War in 1991.

This "sectarian violence" – or in this context its more severe synonym "civil war" – is part of the US's evolving strategy. The illegal US invasion and harsh occupation resulted in the creation of the resistance. The US then opted to use a sectarian approach and restructured Iraq's political institutions to favour Shi'a and Kurdish groups but with the US keeping much of the power arrangements in its favour. The US trains and arms them to fight the Sunni-based resistance and any others who don't fall into line.

Now the US has to stay to protect its client regime and also to make sure it doesn't take an independent course. The Salvador Option or death squads are integral to this strategy. I've no reason to doubt John Pilger who's backed by many others such as Robert Fisk, Dahr Jamail, Patrick Cockburn etc. Baghdad's central morgue is overflowing with evidence.

An occupying army should comply with international law and remain only if there is strong evidence that shows the occupied people want it to stay. My personal experience and various studies indicate the people of Iraq overwhelmingly want the occupiers to leave. A gradual timed withdrawal would remove the major source of violence in this conflict and also any rationale for an armed insurgency. There are many feasible scenarios of withdrawal. Otherwise chances of these groups reconciling are slim.

SG: During the period of your capture, despite the efforts of SJP [Students for Justice in Palestine], AUSA [Auckland University Students' Association] and the University declined the opportunity to show support for your release.

Their reasons being it would jeopardise your chances of being released. What are your thoughts on this?

HS: Unfortunately I don't consider the particulars of my university's behaviour important much beyond the personal. As such I don't really know much. Many colleagues, students and lecturers alike, have expressed great disappointment. Of course, the university had shown support through a letter posted to my family and stated it would act in a manner so as not to jeopardize our lives during captivity. The president of AUSA has admitted to me, informally, that the university was "a little too harsh," but I don't know exactly what he was referring to.

I've been overwhelmed by the support we received from a range of people and groups around the world. I didn't really expect so much. From friends, family, soldiers and government officials, people I'll never meet, virtually all Palestinians (who are enduring a harsh and brutal Israeli occupation) and Jewish groups, Hezbollah and Lebanese Christian leaders, New Zealanders and Canadians, the Muslim community worldwide, including Iraqi human rights activists, called the Independent Activates, who held vigils and took to the streets demonstrating and calling for our release. One of the Activates offered to exchange his life for our release. The Muslim detainees still held in Canada under security certificates – three of them said they valued our freedom more than their own. No charges have been brought against them just like a large proportion of Iraqis in US custody.

Where is the support for the victims of this war? Our plight received a lot of media attention. Where is the coverage of Army Staff Sgt. Stacey C. Brandon? Where are the stories about Zeynab, Noor, Mohammad and Mohanid, the nieces and nephews of one of our captors – children killed by US soldiers?



Above: Harmeet Sooden at Palestine Human Rights Campaign rally against Israeli state terrorism.

SG: Clearly CPT has not let your kidnapping and other possible dangers hinder their work in Iraq

as they have already sent another group into Iraq. Do you agree this is a wise decision considering Tom Fox's death? And if given another opportunity, would you go back?

HS: Members of CPT chose to remain in Baghdad during the hostage crisis. CPT is in constant dialogue with Iraqi NGOs and other advisors about its work in Iraq including its continued presence. After our release, based on these discussions, they decided to leave temporarily, because of security concerns and then re-evaluate the situation.

CPT has now returned to Iraq to a location outside Baghdad but the Iraqi government so far has refused to renew current resident visas or issue new ones for CPTers.

I have to continue to work for peace; commitment, not necessarily location, is what's important.

My enemy's enemy sure as hell isn't my comrade.

By Asher Goldman

Since Israel's latest brutal invasion of Lebanon, some leftist groups and individuals have seen fit to declare their support for Hezbollah. This support has manifested itself predominantly in writing on the Internet and on solidarity marches, protests and demonstrations. In this article, I hope to show that no leftist should support Hezbollah – a sexist, homophobic and anti-working class organisation.

The socialist left (and sadly, some anarchists), both in Aotearoa and globally, seem to formulate their support along one of two lines, described here by the UK Class War Federation in their statement delightfully titled "HezBollocks and IsRabies":

Firstly, wholesale adoption of the Islamist agenda, cheerleading Hamas or Hezbollah without qualification or criticism. This 'Idiot anti-imperialism', the trademark of today's SWP [The UK equivalent of Aotearoa's Socialist Worker], says my enemy's enemy is my friend and any criticism of them, no matter how mild, is 'racism, islamophobia, and Zionist pro American warmongering.' The second approach is slightly more subtle - Hezbollah is fighting back, therefore we

must support Hezbollah and the slogan 'we are all Hezbollah' is an act of basic solidarity with those who are fighting back against imperialism - the slogan is compared with the Parisian students who, when Danny Cohn-Bendit was attacked in the bourgeois press as a German Jew, marched through Paris chanting '*nous sommes tout les juifs allemands!*' (We are all German Jews).

This argument is crap - Hezbollah isn't a nationality or a racial epithet, it is a political party/militia.

My enemy's enemy is my friend. Surely there is few justification for political support that are stupider! Zionists fight anti-Semitism, should we support them? Neo-Nazis oppose Israel, should we support them? The support for Hezbollah can only be explained on one of two grounds – complete ignorance of their beliefs, or the limiting of ones politics to hatred of Israel (and perhaps the USA) to the exclusion of the global working class, women, queers and revolution.

The majority of the civilians killed by Hezbollah were not the Israeli bourgeois, but rather the poorest sectors in society. The rich of the North moved South to stay with friends or family during the rocket attacks, or hired houses for a few weeks. The middle class had bomb shelters in their houses or apartment blocks. Meanwhile, the poorest sectors of Israeli society (predominantly Israeli Palestinians and Israeli Jews from Arab countries), not able to afford bomb shelters, were left to fend for themselves. Meanwhile, in Lebanon, Hezbollah push a sexist and homophobic agenda, especially in the South where their power base lies.

Surely, as revolutionaries, we should be expressing our solidarity with the working class of Lebanon, Palestine and Israel, not with their reactionary oppressors. We should be supporting the work of Lebanese, Palestinian and Israeli leftists, anarchists and all those working for that old cliché, peace with justice and self-determination. For, to quote again from the Class War Federation:

Re-jigging the lines on a map will create new oppressions, new grievances and new horrors, and we as revolutionaries should have no part in assisting that.

How would this be manifested? To quote one example of a positive, liberatory force in Lebanon that wholeheartedly deserves our solidarity and support:

7 Lebanese youth working with the R.A.S.H., the antifascist Red Anarchist Skinhead collective in Europe decided to return to Lebanon to help with relief work as the death toll in their country mounted. Within a few days they were risking their lives walking through southern Lebanon with 80lbs of food and water on their backs to arrive at villages near the Israeli border that humanitarian organizations had deemed unreachable. With Israeli missiles falling all around them, they supplied food to starving people unable to evacuate their villages.

The left is often criticised by Zionists for being anti-Semitic. From what I have seen, read and experienced, this is not the case. There are few anti-Semitic incidents on the left, and I think most of them are probably unconscious. However, a community can be unwelcoming to Jews without being anti-Semitic. It seems to me that support for Hezbollah, while not anti-Semitic in or of itself, does tend to make a community extremely unwelcoming for Jewish leftists.

I can think of a number of Jews who waver from leftist Zionism to cultural Zionism to non-Zionism to anti-Zionism, and I know that for many, comments such as "we are all Hezbollah!" are likely to push them far away from both Jewish anti-Zionist voices and from the radical left in general and back into the mainstream Zionist fold. Is this what we want?

We need to be fostering and encouraging revolutionary currents, and not supporting reactionary religious fundamentalist organisations simply because they happen to be physically confronting imperialist forces at a given moment.

And if Hezbollah is victorious in their goals, then what? Does blind support for them swap into opposition? Good luck finding Lebanese leftists struggling to support them, because Hezbollah's success will naturally mean the end of the secular left in Lebanon.

Seeing the world in only black and white is perhaps the most destructive force in existence for much of the left. Rather, we should recognise that the struggle against capitalism and imperialism does not simply come from one angle. Fascists struggle against modern capitalism (although they are also often used by modern capitalism against leftist anti-capitalists), and likewise, Islamists struggle against imperialism. The Three Way Fight web log (<http://threewayfight.blogspot.com>) phrased it thus:

The idea that there are significant right-wing forces radically opposed to both the left and global capitalist elites doesn't just come from encounters with neo-nazis. If the concept of right-wing anti-imperialism has relevance anywhere, it's in the Middle East. The Iranian Revolution was a wake-up call for me because it showed how militant, mass-based hostility to U.S. hegemony could take a right-wing form -- and because so much of the U.S. left failed to understand this. Three-way fight politics is an attempt to go beyond old leftist categories because the old categories don't adequately describe political reality today -- including political Islam.

A commenter on Three Way Fight proposes a way forward from here:

Rather than trying to figure out the right "anarchist" line on conflicts like in Lebanon, wouldn't it be better to simply understand the underlying forces of the conflict, using the best tools of materialist analysis, as well as the connections to U.S. domestic politics (not just foreign policy)? This would enable us to concentrate on our real task: building a radical working class in this country. In other words, the problem for revolutionaries is not to lend abstract "critical support" to this or that struggle overseas but to build a movement here, one that renders the U.S. incapable of propping up apartheid states like Israel or right-wing fundies like the Mujahadeen.

I think this theory is perhaps the most practical solution I've heard yet. Creativity is needed if we're ever going to create a better society, and this is as good a place as any to start. For, to quote one last time from Three Way Fight:

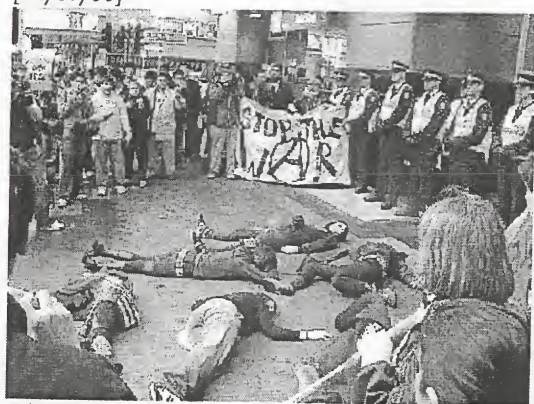
George Bush declared after September 11th:
Either you are with us or against us. Surely
we can do better than that.

The author of the above piece of a member of Aotearoa
Jews For Justice, a nationwide network of Jews opposed to
Israel's imperialist wars that acts in solidarity with the
Lebanese and Palestinian people and with the Israeli
peace movement. For more, visit
<http://www.aotearojewsforjustice.org>



Above: "Stop the massacres in Lebanon," protest march
on Queen street.

[22/07/06]



Above: Die-in outside the U.S. consulate during "Stop
the massacres in Lebanon" protest. [22/07/06]

We really are everywhere

By Omar Hamed

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief
that human history is shaped. Each time a human
stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of
others, or strikes out against injustice, they send forth a
tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a
million different centres of energy and daring, those
ripples build a current that can sweep down the

mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."
- Robert F. Kennedy

Out here in the middle of the south Pacific,
thousands of miles from the daily bombings,
shootings, demolitions and harassment that occurs
in the occupied territories it can sometimes seem
like what we do in this small corner of the world
will have no impact on stopping the Israeli
apartheid. The reality is very different however.
Across the globe people have been coming
together and resisting this injustice. These people
seek out one another, smashing down walls that
separate people and meeting more people and
breaking down bigger, stronger, more oppressive
walls. The struggle for liberation in Palestine is a
global one and those who walk with the
Palestinians are everywhere.

In 2003 a group of students at a university near
Washington, D.C. hosted what they called a "Week
of Awareness for Refugees of Palestine." Events
during the week, held at the University of Maryland
campus, included an art exhibition, music concerts
and a film festival. The centrepiece of the week was
a Palestinian refugee camp constructed in a high
traffic area in the middle of the campus. "Basically
we have four huts constructed of wood, and the
four huts are about 4 feet [1 meter] deep and eight
feet [2.5 meters] tall," said Sami Meaddi, 18, a
freshman at the school who has spent a lot of time
at the refugee camp. "It pretty much simulates what
refugee camps are like. Some of them leak, and they
are very cold at night." The university supported
the construction of the camp, which was
surrounded with information displays, articles and
lists statistics about Palestinian refugee camps and
included a huge wall, nine meters long and 2.5
meters high.

Last year SJP at DePaul University in the US
organised a hip-hop *lyrics for liberty* concert with all
proceeds going to the Palestine Children's Relief
Fund.

On May 15th in 2002 a small group of protesters
from *Jews For a Free Palestine* protested against the
Jewish Community Federation meeting inside by
unfurling inside the conference a banner protesting
aid to Israel and linked arms. Police arrived and the
protesters were taken away.

At Berkley University in 2002 the University
suspended SJP, after hundreds of students occupied
a building and demanded a meeting with the school

chancellor to force the Uni to stop investing in and supporting Israel. Police dragged protesters out of the building and over 79 people were arrested. The group was suspended for "disrupting classes", disruption that included Palestinian children's art, so people could see what the kids there are drawing, what's on their minds and a big white roll of butcher paper that went from the plaza all the way down the street, with the names of all the villages destroyed in 1948 in the founding of Israel. Some students put on kaffiyehs, bound our hands, and were blindfolded, and had a grocery bag with clothes. People walking by said 'who are these people?' They were representing people who were told by the IDF to grab a few things before they destroyed their homes and detained them. One science Professor even told his "disrupted" class to go out and join the protestors.

In 2005 a group of sixty prominent British architects and planners threatened to boycott the Israeli construction industry over the erection of the Occupation Wall and practices in the occupied territories. Following a meeting hosted by the architects behind the Millennium Dome, Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine announced its plan. The group called for an economic boycott of Israeli construction industries in protest of the building of the settlements and the separation wall in the Occupied Palestinians Territories.

At the same time the Church of England's overwhelming vote in favour of divesting its £2.2 million shares from bulldozer manufacturer Caterpillar. The vote, supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, sends a clear message to Caterpillar that profiting from human rights violations is not compatible with socially responsible business practice.

Keeping with the good news, seven activists who blockaded the British distribution centre of Israel's biggest state-owned agricultural export company Agrexco in November 2004 with chicken wire fences and bicycle D-Locks were acquitted of all charges on January 26. The activists had been charged with aggravated trespass. According to Agrexco, it lost £100,000 as a result of the eight-hour blockade. The international campaign to boycott Israeli goods is growing across Europe. In December 2005 a whole region of Norway voted to cut economic relations with Israel. One of the more bizarre acts of resistance to Zionism must be from the San Francisco group Queers Undermining

Israeli Terrorism (QUIT) which "settled" a downtown Starbucks in a protest against Starbucks founder and CEO, Howard Shultz, a major supporter of the Israeli state. "Since Mr. Shultz clearly believes it is okay for one group of people to grab land belonging to another and say they have a right to it, we figure he won't mind if we take some of his," a QUIT leaflet explained.

In Auckland when we blockaded Osmar, a weapons training manufacturer that exports to Israel we caused economic damage by emptying the offices for three afternoons in a row. All those on the blockade knew we were not alone; from San Francisco to Sweden resistance is fertile. We who today are ripples of resistance will tomorrow be the tidal wave that knocks down the walls of oppression and injustice. The question is-will you be a ripple or a wall?



Above: Anti-war demonstrations in Wellington and London.

A Christian Palestinian perspective
Palestine Human Rights Campaign
 spokesperson Tuma Hazou gives his
 opinion on the Palestinian issue.

For centuries, the name Palestinian was given to any Moslem, Christian or Jew born and living in Palestine. After the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the term Palestinian referred to those who remained living in what was left of Palestine (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) or who had left their homes behind and were scattered all over the world. But many in the world think that all Palestinians are Moslems. Tuma Hazou, a Christian Palestinian living in New Zealand, elaborates on the Christian Palestinians' opposition to the partition of Palestine.

In 1947, there were 350,000 Christians living in Palestine. Jointly with Muslims they opposed the partition of Palestine, and called for the independence of Palestine as a democratic state where all its citizens, Muslim, Christians and Jews, could participate in the government of the country. On March 3, 1948, representatives of the eleven Christian denominations in Palestine, namely, the Orthodox Patriarchate, the Latin Patriarchate, the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate, the Custodian de Terra Santa, the Coptic Patriarchate, the Vicar of Melkite Patriarchate, Metropolitan of the Syriac Orthodox Community, the Vicar of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate, the Arab Evangelical Episcopal Community, the Vicar of the Syriac Catholic Patriarchate, and the Arab Lutheran Community in Palestine, appealed to the United Nations and to the world religious and political bodies in which they stated:

"It is our firm conviction that peace will not be restored nor would any endeavors made for the promotion of the "peace of Jerusalem" be crowned with success, unless those bodies who undertake the determination of the future of Palestine would remove the causes which have made a battlefield of the Holy Land. Re-establish the principles of justice and maintain the right of self-determination as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations Organization. The Christian Union wish to declare, in unequivocal terms, that they denounce the partition plan, being of the strong conviction that this plan involves a violation of the sacredness of the Holy Land which, by its nature and history, is

indivisible, and represents an encroachment on the natural rights of the Arab, the people of the country."

In 1947 the Christian population of Palestine was 350,000. In 1948 the Israelis grabbed 80% of Palestine and expelled 700,000 Muslim and 100,000 Christian Arabs from the territory they occupied which comprised an additional 50% more than was allocated to Jews in the UN Partition Plan. In Israel itself, by 1969 the Palestinian Christians who managed not to flee their homes numbered no more than 45,000.

Both in the 1948 and the 1967 wars, Christian property and especially churches and religious establishments came under Israeli military attacks. To highlight only a few such attacks:

The Greek Orthodox Convent of St. George was occupied on 14 May 1948; and the famous "Notre Dame de France" was severely damaged and occupied on 15 May and used as a main base to attack Jerusalem.

The Italian Hospital- occupied 15 May 1948 despite its being under the protection of the Red Cross; and used to shell the old city of Jerusalem.

Seminary of Ste. Anne was bombed on 17 & 19 May 1948 suffering heavy damage and many of the refugees within were wounded.

The Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate was hit with about one hundred mortar bombs launched by the Zionists from the monastery of the Benedictine Fathers on Mount Zion. These bombs also damaged St. Jacob's Convent, the Archangels Convent and their churches, their two Elementary and Seminary schools along with their libraries. Eight people were killed as a result of the attacks and 120 wounded



During the June war of 1967 Israeli forces shelled and damaged many churches in the old city of Jerusalem. Israeli forces opened the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to Jews who were indecently dressed and behaving

disrespectfully, pouring insults against Christianity next to the tomb of Jesus Christ.

The crimes committed by the Zionists reflected the deep-felt hatred of everything Christian. Testimony shows that this feeling went so deep that the Zionist authorities removed the international "+" sign from textbooks because of the resemblance of the plus sign to the Christian cross. Chairman of Israel Human Rights League, Israel Shahak, has written about the deep-rooted Zionist hatred of Christianity and the manifestations of that hatred in Israel. Shahak himself a Jew, quotes in his book "Jewish History, Jewish Religion" this special curse against Christians from the daily prayer book used by many Orthodox Jews in Israel: "And may the apostates have no hope, and all the Christians perish instantly" (page 92). On page 93 Dr. Shahak says that a devout Jew must utter a curse when passing near a Gentile cemetery, and upon seeing a dwelling inhabited by people other than Jews must ask God to destroy it. He further writes:

"Dishonoring Christian religious symbols is an old religious duty in Judaism. Spitting on the cross, an especially on the Crucifix, and spitting when a Jew passes a church, have been obligatory from around AD 200 for pious Jews. The increasing strength of the Jewish state has caused these customs to become more open again but there should be no mistake: The spitting on the cross for converts from Christianity to Judaism, organized in Kibbutz Sa'adand financed by the Israeli government is an act of traditional Jewish piety.

The Christian population of Palestine, the descendents of the earliest followers of Christ, were the first Christians to recognize the anti-Christian bigotry built into the Zionist ideology. Having long dwelt in peace with Muslim and Jewish fellow citizens in Palestine, Palestinian Christians recognized that the Zionist colonists were a different breed, lacking the piety of Palestinian Jews. The peaceful cohabitation of Christians, Muslims and Jews in Palestine was disrupted by the militant ideologues propagating Zionism, and Palestinian Christians feared the growth of the Zionists presence in their native land and united with Muslims in opposing Zionism and the Zionist invasion of Palestine. Their fears were well founded.

Arab Christians have always been an integral part of Arab Society. Yet in the confrontations between

the Arab world and the nominally Christian West, Arab Christians have been uniquely situated to play a vital role. Ever since the West became intimately involved in the affairs of the Arab World, starting from the Napoleonic campaign, through the period of colonialism, and independence, the Zionist enterprise and the State of Israel, and continuing through the current "war on terrorism" they continue to hold a unique position.

Arab Christians do have a greater understanding of the West, its languages, culture, politics, and methods. Through certain shared knowledge, as well as important connections, as well as the education of their children in the West, or in Western Christian missionary institutions, Arab Christians have been better able to understand, appreciate, and ultimately resist the political influence of the West and its attempts to dominate their homeland.

This fact is well worth remembering in the current context when again the confrontation between the Arab World and the West utilises religious terms and is presented as a struggle between Western Christianity and Islam. To be sure, much of the political effort of Arab Christians found expression in secular nationalism, for which they were early pioneers and zealous advocates. From George Antonious (The Arab Awakening), Albert Hourani, Michele Aflaq, and George Habash to Edward Said, Arab Christians have been prominent leaders and thinkers and activists in the Arab Nationalist movement. One of the tenets of that movement has always been setting aside religion as a matter of personal choice, and insisting on equal responsibility of Christians and Moslem in the national enterprise. The slogan was "Religion belongs to God, but the homeland belongs to all". While Arab nationalism was not anti-religious in its secularism, it was always emphatic in acknowledging the equality of Christians and Moslems, and the need to leave religion to the spiritual sphere.



Left:
Aucklanders march for justice and peace during Israel's invasion of Lebanon.
[22/07/06]

Defeat: a time for self-reflection

By Sahar Ghumkhor

It was forged from the wreckage of tragedy and horror – following the painful memory of an unimaginable crime against humanity. If we learn from the mistakes of the past then we are committed to a better future. But the tragedy of the Holocaust never did end in the camps of Dachau and Auschwitz- it festers like an untended wound in the land of the Semites. A wasteland of doom has unrelentingly produced new victims. 'Never again', Israelis proclaim - unless of course the tragedy is revisited upon 'the other side'.

Israel has embarked upon a lonely path of self-destruction. It is illustrated in the tragedy played out before us in the recent assault on Gaza and Lebanon.

The once-professed invincibility of one of the greatest modern military forces has been shattered into humiliating pieces. It is a new image we are seeing of Israel – a tail between its legs and a look of utter defeat.

The Israeli army retreated from a devastated Lebanon after 34 days of intense bombing raids. Remarkably - at a time where Israelis should be self-reflecting, the blame game insists on prevailing. The army blame the politicians; the politicians blame the generals. What of the Israeli public? They're desperately trapped between two rabid dogs, trying to make sense out of this quagmire of blame. But it's the Israeli people who should be frothing at the mouth.

Lacking the military glory of past Prime Ministers, and with a need to prove himself as a military strongman, Ehud Olmert has exposed the growing paradigm of Israel's vulnerability to resistance groups like Hezbollah despite being armed to its teeth with sophisticated weaponry.

Make no mistake; this was a war of choice. Planned a year ago, the inspiration evolved out of years of expansionism and military arrogance. However the plan backfired. The stage was set and the actors poised in this theatrical drama. But some of them clearly hadn't learnt their lines.

The Western version of the recent conflict began with the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by crazed Hezbollah guerrillas - on the border between Lebanon and Israel. Israeli-sovereignty was apparently violated, and hence there was a moral justification for crossing the border and the subsequent bombing assaults on Lebanon. The actual version is a tad broader in context: two civilians were kidnapped in Gaza (to be added to the countless Palestinian prisoners illegally detained in Israeli prisons) without charge. There was no response from the West, not even a squeak. In response, an Israeli soldier was kidnapped. Predictably, this elicited plenty of outrage from the West. As a consequence, Gaza was bombed and 170 civilians were killed. Again, silence from the Western audience. It's only a crime if Israeli blood is spilt. In retaliation, Hezbollah killed three Israeli soldiers, and captured two on Lebanese territory. Similar patterns of events had been taking place between both sides for years. In this specific case, the only sovereignty violated has been Lebanese.

The final product? 154 Israelis dead: 117 of them soldiers; more than 400 civilians wounded. On the Lebanese side: over a thousand dead civilians; thousands wounded, and an unknown number of Hezbollah fighters dead or wounded. In addition: a million refugees; a lot of angry people. A once Western-friendly country is now in ruins, understandably bitter and most likely vengeful for what has been done to them. It was a lose-lose situation no matter how it is analysed.

These events are another ugly manifestation of the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. British MP George Galloway summed it up well when he said "...the origins of this conflict are not 4 weeks old, or 4 years old, or 14 years old...but decades old....." The conflict is spilling its toxin beyond its borders, and drawing in more players to take part in this orgy of mutation and misery. Like the American people who became the unwilling foot soldiers in an illegal war in Iraq, Israelis too have been brutally awoken with the realisation they're vulnerable now more than ever. They're surrounded by hostile neighbours. Moreover, the neighbours are beginning to put their petty differences aside in favour of uniting against a common enemy. Israel's military solution has obviously failed.

Condoleeza Rice was correct; what we witnessed are the birth pangs of a new Middle East. But the birth is going to be more painful than she and her

neo-con mates realise. It's going to be bloody and noisy. The birth will not be what Washington or Tel-Aviv wants either. It won't be friendly, but rationally enraged. It won't be secular, but multi-religious. Hezbollah's victory stands testimony to that. It has won the hearts and minds of the Lebanese people. According to a poll released by the Beirut Centre for Research and Information 87 percent of Lebanese support Hezbollah's fight with Israel- a rise of 29 percent on a similar poll conducted in February. From non-Shiite groups polled, some 80 percent of Lebanese Christians support Hezbollah along with 80 percent of Druze and 89 percent of Sunni Muslims.

While according to another poll, from July 2005, 74 percent of Christian Lebanese viewed Hezbollah as a resistance organisation. Furthermore, it has galvanised support across the Arab and Muslim world. It has proven to them that a small guerrilla group can defeat a powerful army. Most importantly, it has brought a sense of unity amongst the Sunnis and Shiites. Hezbollah, which represents 35% of the Lebanese population, clearly isn't going downhill.

Is this what Israel wanted? What has the military solution done for them this time around, or even in the past? Israel has developed a samsonite arsenal of weapons, but the hostility has not abated. Israelis have remained vulnerable, and hiding behind high-tech weaponry has done nothing for them. With every Apache helicopter gifted to them from the U.S., the Hezbollah's and Hamas' just keep popping up like an annoying pimple on Israel's face. Every city that falls to a callous bombing raid, every drop of Arab blood that is shed - the perseverance of the resistance groups grows ever strong. Hezbollah's leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah's ambitious promise of re-building Southern Lebanon with hundreds of millions of dollars is tantamount to this.

In Gaza, Hamas' grass-root connections, medical and educational facilities ease the suffering of Palestinians under occupation, and ensure their unfailing loyalty. These groups are notably popular forces of the New Middle East. Branding them as "terrorists" isn't going to make them disappear. Or perchance this form of demonising is being done intentionally in order to legitimise the oppression of their mass supporters.

Israelis have been duped into believing this was all done in the name of security. Every sacrifice was made in the name of defence. The bogeyman mantra that all Arabs are driven by an inherent irrational anti-Semitism to obliterate Jews at any chance feeds the hysteria. Still, some Israelis are force-fed the asinine myth that the Arabs want to drive the Jews into the sea. Up until recently, Israel's idea of a school trip for its youth was to visit Holocaust concentration camps. Encapsulating their youth with the horror of the past is beyond disturbing. It was to remind them that it could have been them in the ovens. Thus, an unnatural fear drives the conflict. A manufactured fear that has victimised the Israeli people and has created a barrage of hysteria that has historically prohibited them to understand the other side - to see the humanity of the 'enemy' - to comprehend the incomprehensible.

Have they ever paused to stop and think why they are defending themselves, as opposed to the need to defend themselves? Yet reminders of the past terrible injustices upon the Jews smother the ones who dare to question this supposed threat. And in typical "you are either with us or against us!" fashion - are marked with the disdain of treachery and ostracism. Curiously some Israelis, Jews included, are even called "anti-Semites".

Instead, policymakers assiduously build the barriers to peace with the debris of fear and anxiety - all the while committing Israel to the slippery-slope of perpetual warfare and death.

Nay, it is not Hamas and Hezbollah with their erstwhile calls for Israel to be wiped off the map - which the Israeli people should fear. They say nothing but hot air from a frustrated people. It is the Israeli government and their partners in Washington - the main agents who want this conflict to continue. It is they, the rabid war-dog imperialists who have created and zealously preserved a cycle of perpetual war and expansionism. Israel is nothing more than a military base for them. The Israeli people are mere pawns in the larger scheme of things. Like their Arab counterparts, their blood is cheap for the greater agenda of domination in the region. If peace and official recognition were what the Israeli and American governments wanted, they would have had it a long time ago. But peace is not their chosen language of communication.

Take for example the 1971 Egyptian offer of a full peace treaty with Israel. Israel fully understood that this peace offer would put an end to any security threat, but the government decided to reject security in favour of expansion into the Sinai. It wasn't until after a foolish war and the death of thousands did a weakened Israel sign a treaty with the Egyptians. Washington however, supported Israel's stand: force, not diplomacy.

Take Syria, which has never normalised relations with Israel, but has offered to take part in negotiations if the Golan Heights -which were annexed in the 1967 war -are returned. The Israelis don't want to hear it. They're content with selling Syrian wine as their own.

Or what about the Arab League's Beirut Declaration of March 2002, by which all Arab states including Palestine offered Israel permanent peace and normal diplomatic and economic relations in return for Israel's compliance with international law by returning to its internationally recognised pre-1967 borders. The rest of the world, even the 'radicals' of Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini welcomed it.

But Tel-Aviv and Washington insist on waving the certificate of "no one to talk to". Of course it is doctrinally unacceptable. Terrorists aren't meant to sit around tables and talk about their issues; they're supposed to blow up things. How outrageous! What do they think they are? Civilised? Instead, throughout the peace agreements, Israeli governments curtailed any efforts which were advanced, by building US-backed colonial settlements and infrastructure programs in the occupied West Bank to create "facts on the ground" - cruelly preventing the potential for a future Palestinian state. Consequently this divided the ever-increasing Palestinian territories and ate away the most resource-rich area of the West Bank.

In fact, the 'withdrawal' from Gaza was openly announced as consolidating the occupation of the West Bank. It seems irrelevant to Israel that such activity is in violation of numerous UN resolutions. They seem blind to the fact that it's going to breed a plethora of resentment and extremism.

Do not these examples illustrate some of the reasons why Palestinians and Arabs might be just a tad upset? Is it not to the benefit of Israel to prove itself as a worthy negotiating partner by showing respect

for the laws of civilised nations, and recognising the legitimacy of the calls for addressing historical injustices against the Palestinian people? It behoves both sides to come to an agreement that allows progress and sustainable peace.

Israelis insist that going back to the 1967 borders - which international law expects of them - is suicidal. "They'll come for us" they cry out. "It'll just make it easier for them to wipe us off the map". The military 'solution' has dug Israel a deeper grave though. It is now surrounded by even more hostile neighbours, and isolated it from the international community. No Olmert promise of a 'permanent border' is going to protect the Israelis in the hotbed of war and an enraged environment that they've created around themselves. That's a guarantee.

Instead, they're committing themselves to a life of anxiety, and eventual self-destruction.

It is time for Israel to wake up and see the discrepancies and the erroneous arguments used in support of a military solution. To ask the right questions-who is benefiting from it? So far it hasn't been the Israeli people. Uri Avnery of the Jewish group Gush Shalom addressed his fellow Israelis on the eve of defeat, as his nation grappled with what has happened: *"For logic to win, we must be honest with ourselves: pinpoint the failures, investigate their deeper causes, draw the proper conclusion"*.

I cannot think of better advice for the Israeli people.



Above: Anti-war demonstration in Sydney 22/07/06

LAND IN DISPUTE



Animal rights activists: Up against the wall By William Budington

In the early afternoon of December 26, 2003, a coalition of Israeli activists working against the occupation fence enclosing the West Bank approached the hundred mile barrier near the Palestinian village of Mas'ha, four miles from the Green Line. They had decided to continue their march from the northern Palestinian city of Jenin to the Israeli-annexed Jerusalem, highlighting the violence of the occupation and calling for an end to this apartheid. Nonviolence was the tactic: they were to shake the fence and attempt to dismantle it using boltcutters, issuing the message that they would not be halted by barriers that not only separate people, but sever the lines of dialogue between them.

During the course of the action, however, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) responded without provocation, restraint, or moderation. Standing twenty feet in front of the activists, they opened fire on the crowd with live ammunition. One activist, Gil Na'amati, was hit in the leg and severely injured. As he was being rushed to the hospital, the real significance of this incident began to set in—not only for those involved, but also for anyone aware of the political realities in Israel and occupied Palestine (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchists_Against_the_Wall). While brutality of this kind is routine when its subjects are Palestinian, it was the first time that the Israeli army had ever opened fire on Israeli Jews. During the media frenzy that immediately followed the event, the activists were quickly christened: "Anarchists Against the Wall," "Although the name stuck, few Israelis remember or are aware that this action had actually been carried out under the name "OneStruggle."

One Struggle developed from the radical animal rights and anarchist movements, as an attempt to illuminate the common roots of oppression, discrimination, and exploitation affecting humans and non-humans alike. To these activists, oppression is a social phenomenon, caused by the human social relation of domination and hierarchy over both other species and their own. In a country such as Israel, this viewpoint comes not as an abstract theoretical analysis emanating from some ivory tower, but as an eminent conclusion from the everyday experiences of politically conscious people. Anyone who has visited a slaughterhouse can sense the fear in pigs' eyes as they are brought to their untimely end, feel outrage and anger towards

those who facilitate and promote this slaughter, and be compelled to action against these abuses. These very same reactions are present when viewing the slaughter of human subjects.

"In 2002, 'One Struggle' was officially formed by a handful of animal rights activists, after several long meetings regarding both theory and practice ... it was never meant to be the kind of group that seeks members; [we organized] more along the lines of an affinity group, a small, close-knit collective of people who know each other and share a more or less similar vision," explained one member. Fed up with the asceticism that has come to dominate modern revolutionary movements, One Struggle's tactic of choice is straightforward action: demonstrations, pickets, posterings, information stalls, and good old-fashioned conversation. When it comes to well-planned direct action against animal abusers, whether public or clandestine, their position has never been ambiguous: they give it their full support. Though small in numbers, One Struggle's impact has been tremendous within Israel and the occupied territories. For the 2002 World Day for Laboratory Animals, organized by the Israeli Society for the Abolition of Vivisection, a number of the featured speakers were members of the Israeli Knesset, and guilty of complicity in and outright support of the occupation. In response, One Struggle handed out leaflets pointing out the hypocrisy of supporting brutal treatment of Palestinians by the Israeli army while opposing brutal treatment of animals by scientists. One Struggle members are also in attendance every Gay Pride Day, reaching out to the gay community and imploring them to recognize not only their own oppression, but also that of those who cannot speak out for themselves.

A number of actions have been organized under the One Struggle banner as well: for over a year they have been holding weekly vigils outside McDonalds, alerting customers and passersby to the cruelty of factory farming. Last May, One Struggle occupied the offices of Proctor & Gamble to protest its major role in animal testing, and in July they chained themselves to the gates of a horse racing tournament, despite the antagonism of spectators. Just recently, many members have been pouring their energy into "Veggie Bar," a vegan fair trade bar located in central Tel Aviv, that offers homemade vegan meals and drinks.

While initiating support camps in the West Bank, they have also coordinated joint Israeli-Palestinian peaceful anti-border actions in Salem, Anin, and Zabube. Recognizing that solidarity is impossible without shared channels of dialogue, understanding, and experience, activists from both sides of the wall have come together to form temporary communities at these anti-border camps. These communities operate by consensus decision-making involving all parties at the camp, in the true tradition of direct democracy. Many Palestinian activists are introduced to animal rights at these camps, and the Israeli activists learn of the hardships of Palestinian people first-hand.

As the suffering of humans and non-humans continues, One Struggle will continue its fight for the liberation of all creatures. That so much has been accomplished by such a small, young group, numbering no more than 25 members, is testament to the dedication of these activists and anarchists. A climate of resistance is beginning to develop in Israel, which is critical for such an urgent situation.



1,189 Lebanese were killed and approximately



4,399 injured during the 2006 conflict. 1/3 of those were children

still selling equipment to some rather nasty militaries.

In August 29th last year the NZ Herald revealed that Auckland technology firm Rakon was producing crystal oscillators for the American arms company Rockwell Collins to use in the production of smart bombs for the US Military. Rakon's marketing director, Darren Robinson, was asked by the newspaper if his company's crystals were specifically invented for US smart bombs he answered yes. To quote from the report 'Asked if the technology was being used in Iraq, Mr Robinson said the company "didn't really want to draw attention to where they [the US military] are using it... We don't want to become a target.'" The next day Rakon was so embarrassed by the revelations that its managing director, Brent Robinson the brother of marketing director Darren Robinson, told the Herald that the company was not privy to the "end-use systems, equipment or applications used by its customers".

Unfortunately for Rakon the public scrutiny of their company's military related exports did not end there. On May 27th 2006 the NZ Herald published a large feature investigation on Rakon, which used leaked company documents for most of its sources. It found that Rakon's denial of knowing how customers used its products was a complete lie. In 1996 Rakon began specifically developing oscillators for use in JDAM smart bombs. The US Airforce even commended for outstanding delivery performance during critical times (preparations for bombing Yugoslavia). JDAM smart bombs have been dropped by the US Military in Kosovo, Iraq

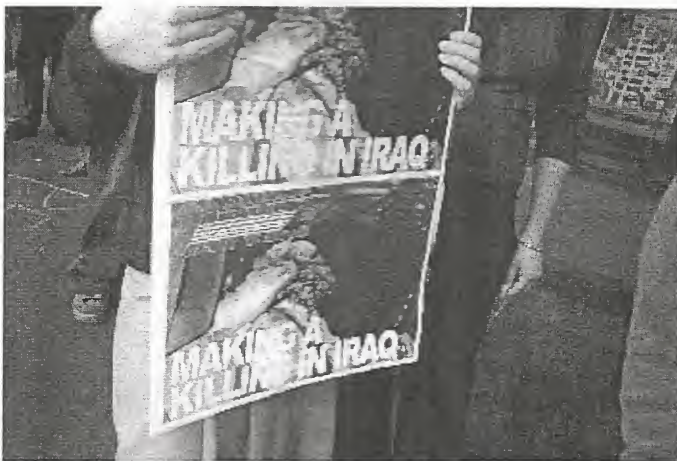
Afghanistan causing wide scale death and destruction.

Despite the fact Rakon willingly participates in exports that help create more wars and regional instability the NZ government, since 1996, has used \$593,412 of taxpayer money to give Rakon grants.

Some New Zealanders excuse the behaviour of companies, such as Osmar, Infratil and Rakon, because they are 'our companies'. We have got to realise that these companies are as much a part of the Military/Industrial complex as large US arms companies, like Lockheed Martin. They are not our friends. As George Orwell once wrote 'War against a foreign country only happens when the moneyed classes think they are going to profit from it.'



Above: "Osmar?" | "Profits from Murder!"- SJP blockades Osmar International. [29/09/065]



Above: Anti-war protestors have taken their message to ANZ Bank.

Want more information on who is making a killing in New Zealand? Check out: Peace Movement Aotearoa
www.converge.org.nz/pma

electronicintifada.net



News, Information and Opinion from a Palestinian perspective.

When death becomes a sacrifice

The following is a short story written by Rana Ghumkhor. It examines the motivations of a suicide bomber.

The Dead cannot ask for justice it is the duty of the living to do so. For my father and for my people the hunger of my hatred opens its mouth. Calling to me to avenge those who have fallen. Years ago my father gave his life for me. Tonight I die for Palestine.

I could start by telling you my name, but what would be the point? I'm just a face, in a sea of oppression, inflicted upon my people. For generations we suffered at the hands of the Zionists. Oh my insane rage vengeance will be ours, the clouds will clear and the sun will shine on us again. They think by uprooting our trees they can destroy our history? But our history is in our hearts and we will tell it to our children and they will tell it to their children. They cannot cut off our tongues.

There is no promise of a tomorrow, there is just today and there was yesterday. Tonight the battle ends for me but the struggle continues for the thousands that suffer today and will continue to suffer tomorrow. Will my death make a difference? Will it mean something? I wonder this as I sit in this bus full of nameless faces staring, watching me, but I don't see them. I am blinded by hatred so strong, so powerfully deep that it only allows me to see their hands stained with the blood of my ancestors and of this sacred land.

I am vaguely aware of the rain beating against the window. The sky now completely dark, covered in a blanket of shining stars. The night is cold; the stench of blood and oppression is in the air. Before this bus is to reach its final destination I will be a martyr. My existence finally having a purpose, in spilling my blood for a cause I truly believe in. There is no greater honour.

Religion is what keeps us alive. It is what keeps us going, because in the mind of a freedom fighter fear of god is greater than the fear of death. The desire for paradise dominates our thoughts, reminding us that this wasn't the way life was supposed to be. Suddenly my train of thought comes to an abrupt halt as the bus comes to a stop I glance up to see cars lining up in front of the bus. I shrug it off as

traffic. I know time is running out. I look outside the window and can barely make out my city of Jenin in the distance. I know this will be the last time I will see my home ever again. There is no turning back now, it is at the end of a person's life when they realise how important the choices in her life are. Maybe my death won't make a difference; maybe my people will continue to live in terror tomorrow. But maybe for just a moment, my enemies can feel what we feel when we lose a brother or a sister, a father or a mother, a daughter or a son. If they can feel what we feel for just a moment for just a fraction of a second, my death would have been worth something.

Out of the corner of my eye I can make out shadows ahead, figures moving in the night. Lost in my thoughts I realise the bus still hasn't moved. I look around to see people anxiously standing in their seats eager to see what the commotion was about. The driver of the bus, an old elderly Jewish man also gets up "Excuse me, there seems to be a problem that is preventing us from continuing, please wait patiently and soon you will all reach your homes". I smirk at the irony. For I knew; no one will leave this bus alive. The young girl across from me gasps, as she looks out the window. It was at that moment that she turns to look at me, her eyes wide with fear, fear in my world only means one thing "They've found a body in the road ahead".

I jump out of my seat pushing past the people that have stumbled into the aisle to watch the "show". I make my way to the front of the bus, every step I take bringing me closer to yet another Palestinian casualty. As I approach the door the bus driver grabs me roughly by the shoulders. I glare at him, a blood thirsty hatred filling my heart, "its just another terrorist" he spits I grab his hands pulling them away from me "one mans terrorist is another mans freedom fighter" I push past him barely noticing my surroundings. The rain beats against me forbidding me to continue. Disorientated with my overwhelming urgency to get to the fallen soldier I push past the people gathering in front of me. The rain blinding my vision I can make out the corpse lying in the road ahead. Illuminated by the light of the bus I slowly began to make my way over to him "beaten to death" says a voice behind me "just another terrorist" says another "they had it coming". I can feel the lump growing in my throat, clenching my fists, my nails digging into the flesh of my palms drawing blood. I continue on my way

towards our fallen fighter. His face is hidden behind the customary beard and a Palestinian sacrificial scarf draped in blood. I smile through my tears with recognition. His face bares the signs of yet another act of oppression, scared with bruises and cuts; I open my mouth to scream but the words die in my throat.

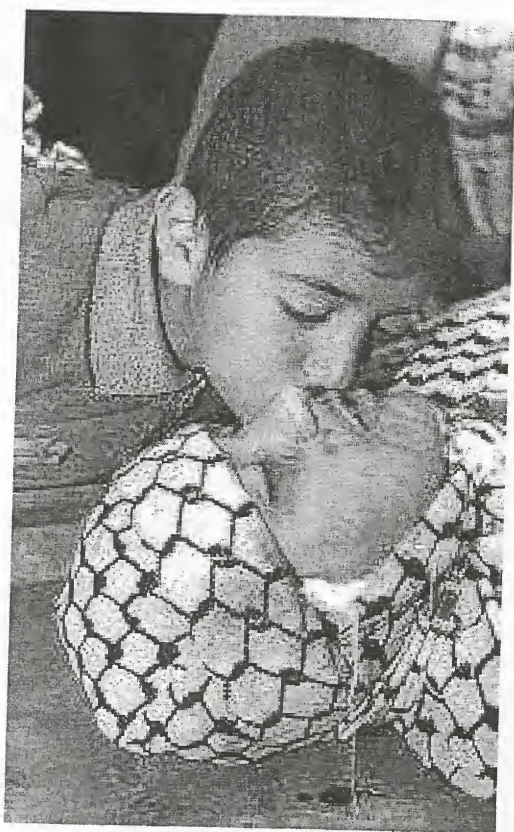
This is the reality of our lives; this is what our people have come to, lying in ditches drowning in their own blood. I glance down at the unknown corpse; it is his shirt that catches my attention. There written in the language of my people are the words "freedom is worth dying for". These words are familiar to me, bringing back memories of a day that even in the safety of my dreams I cannot escape. The day that has brought me to make the decision I have made today.

It was always just me and my father growing up, my mother had died giving birth to me. For as long as I could remember he always took care of me, always protected me, always there. So that day, as we walked through the streets of Jenin I felt complete, I felt safe with my father at my side. I looked up at him; he was always a handsome man with dark, clean cut features and green stunning eyes. I was memorized; he looked down at me smiling, his teeth glowing in the sun. "My daughter always remembers that our people were never meant for a life like this, we will taste freedom when the hour comes". I looked at him carefully not understanding entirely what he meant, yet as I watched him, his eyes darkened. Those eyes that were always shining with love and happiness now shone with despair and sorrow.

The next few minutes were a blur, and then I distinctly remember lying on the ground. My father shielding me from the shower of bullets overhead. The sounds of guns going off were deafening. Then there was silence; I slowly wriggled out from under my father's still form. "Baba?" I asked. I reached for his face but recoiled almost immediately, he was pale as a ghost. "Baba!" I asked this time with much more force. My father wasn't moving and my father wasn't answering. It was at that moment my cousins appeared at my side, pulling me away from the corpse. I screamed. I screamed as loud as I could. I screamed for my father. I screamed for my poor dead mother. I screamed for Palestine...

The sound of heavy sobbing brings me out of my daze. I am surprised to find myself clutching at the

body of the unknown Palestinian, but I am even more surprised to find that it is me that was sobbing. I wipe away the tears that have been trickling down my face. I stare down at my hands that are drenched with my tears "Palestine will shed tears of blood Unite oh glorious people for this is what we have, in a world where we bleed alone" I speak softly down to the nameless fighter bidding my farewell to him. I make silent promises of paradise as I blindly make my way back to the bus. Ignoring the bus driver's obvious distaste I sit myself back in my seat losing myself in my thoughts. I don't notice the looks of discomfort nor do I notice the bus moving again.



The faces of the fallen soldier and my father are dancing in front of me refusing to leave me. I know now more than ever I am making the right decision. My father's eyes had closed before mine had truly opened, I couldn't see before, but I can see now. The dream of a free Palestine is just that, a dream. A dream that in my time, I will not come to see. I make a plea to my people fight; fight until you have the will to fight no more. If our enemies vouch for a just peace then let there be no more war, for god never loves the starters of war.

"We will be reaching Jerusalem in a few minutes " I sit up straighter in my seat. It is now the time, I can wait no longer. I feel around in my pocket for the trigger that leads to the c4-tapped securely to my chest. I swallow the bile that had risen in my throat. I am afraid yes, I am afraid the bomb won't go off. There is no greater shame than failure and I have no desire to fail. I close my eyes imagining what it will be like. Will it hurt? Will I meet my maker upon my death? Or will I wait till the day of reckoning where we all shall be judged. But some questions can't be answered, you can turn back to your ancestors who are grey and wise with knowledge but even they don't know what's at the end of the long road. Many may call us cowards, maybe we are, we would rather end the battle here then live to see what becomes of our faith. Faith is what we need for survival; Faith is the only thing many of us have. We cling to it like a newborn child clinging to its mother. It's what keeps the hope in our hearts alive.

Oh lord forgive me for my sins. Forgive my father, forgive my family and most of all forgive my people. Shed some light on our oppression and free us.

I clutch the trigger in my hand. I take the time to acknowledge each person in the bus. I feel the walls in my heart closing up for I feel no pity where we received none. I look out the window for the last time. The bus is coming over a hill. There lies Jerusalem in all its glory. I close my eyes and take my last breath.... Freedom

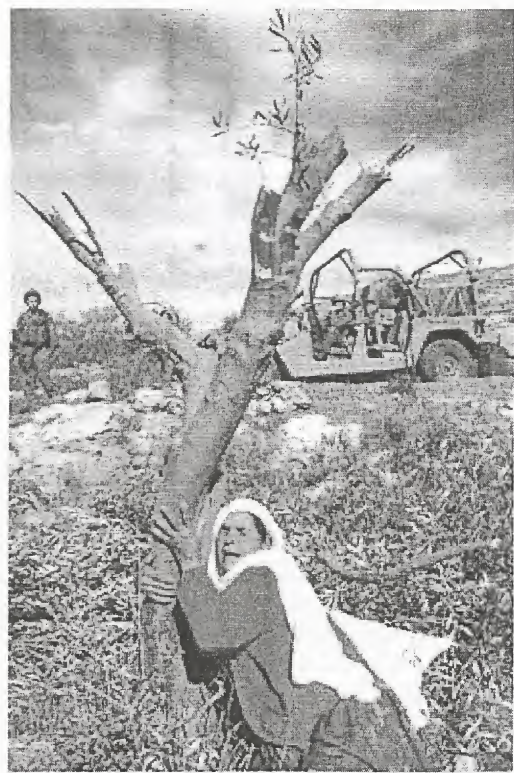
Below: The daily humiliation of Israeli checkpoints.



*Zmag.org - The Spirit of Resistance.
US based news source about the global
resistance to imperialism and capitalism*



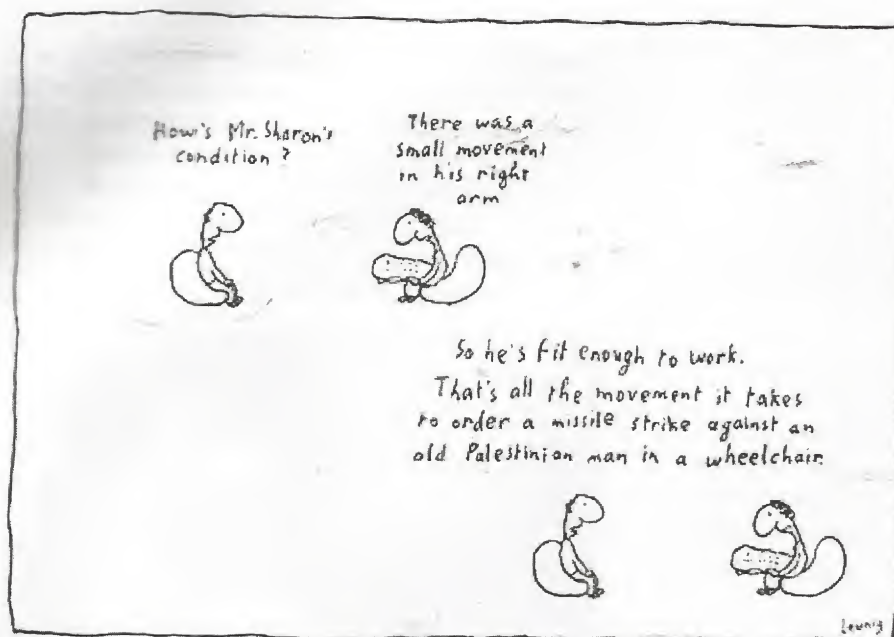
Above: Israel's indiscriminate bombing raids send Lebanese civilians- including children- to an early grave.



Above: A Palestinian woman embraces an uprooted tree- an act that typifies Israel's rape of Palestinian land and economy.

Palsolidarity.org

The International Solidarity Movement (ISM) is a Palestinian-led movement committed to resisting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land using nonviolent, direct-action methods and principles. Check out their website. One Auckland SJP worked with ISM in 2005.

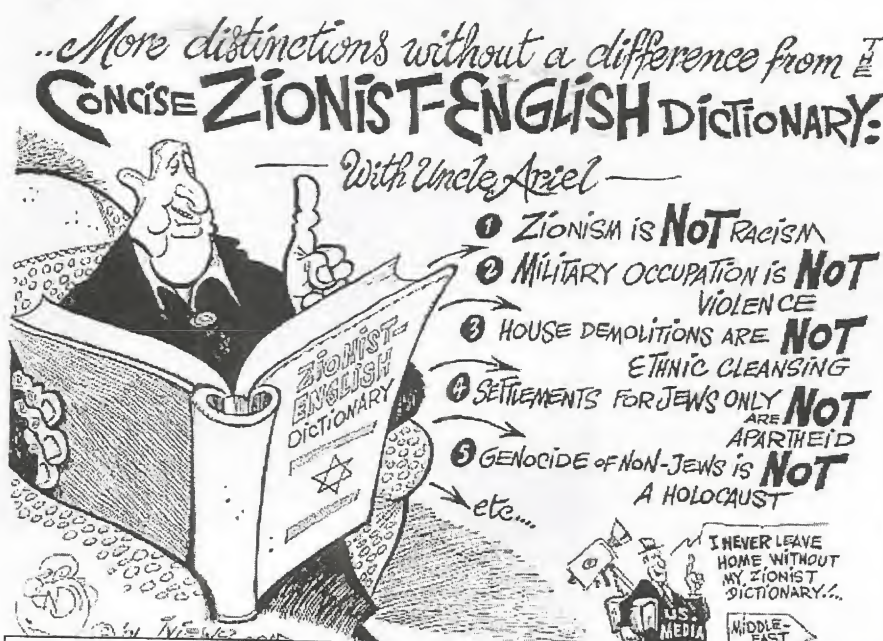


An Injury to One is an Injury to All

On August 4, 2006 Israeli jets bombed a Lebanese fruit-packing warehouse near the Syrian border that killed at least 33 mainly Kurdish farm workers and wounded a dozen more. The National Distribution Union (NDU) of New Zealand released a statement "calling on the New Zealand government to condemn the Israeli Defence Force and to call for an immediate investigation into allegations of Israeli war crimes and breaches of international law."

National Secretary of the (NDU) Laila Harré called for union members to join protests in support of Palestinians and Lebanese victims of war and members and organisers from the NDU and other unions were present at every demonstration to stop the war on Lebanon.

Unions have a long history being active in anti-war and anti-militarist movements and unions often take direct action in support of oppressed people. Unions have also been among the more progressive organisations working on civil rights, environmental, anti-corporate globalisation and feminist struggles. In the lead up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq unions in Aotearoa and across the world mobilised and



organised against the war while workers in many nations refused to move arms and goods used in the invasion.

Labour organisations play an important role in social movements because they are democratic organisations of ordinary people. Unions are collective way workers and students can stand together in solidarity with the oppressed people of the world. They are part of the global resistance to war and imperialism, so join your local union!

Student for Justice in Palestine are on the web!

www.ausjp.wordpress.com

Stay up to date with the global campaign to Free Palestine! Support your local intifada!



Bleeding Alone

By Nahid Ghumkhor

"The children of Adam are limbs of one another, created from a single substance when one limb suffers misfortune, the others cannot be at rest. You who do not suffer the pain of others do not deserve to be called human"

Twelfth century Persian poet Saadi never spoke truer words. Amid the chaos and bloodshed sweeping across the Middle East; Afghanistan has once again become the forgotten war. As the rest of the world is preoccupied with oil rich neighbouring Iraq, barren Afghanistan is steadily leading to chaos and violence. Often hailed by the US government as a 'beacon of democracy' in the Middle East, Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with one of the lowest living standards. Two thirds of the population live on less than 2 dollars a day.

Despite claims of a mission accomplished, the Taliban are resurging with an increasing display of power and influence in the south. Areas of Helmand and Kunduz are experiencing a new phenomenon of suicide bombings. Never seen in Afghanistan before. Unsurprisingly, anti-American sentiments is on a high, as US soldiers-immune from foreign prosecution- are consistently involved in "friendly fire" incidents resulting in the death of innocent civilians. U.S. convoys are running down Afghans indiscriminately on the streets. Earlier this year, this caused deadly riots and resulted in the death of a dozen protestors. U.S. bombing raids on villages is a daily occurrence, and indiscriminate targets resulted in the death of civilians- usually women and children. Consequently, the Taliban are gaining support and influence from ordinary Afghans, especially from the poorer population who have not seen or benefited from the billions of dollars of aid pledged by western governments.

The Karzai government are increasingly becoming unpopular abroad, unable to stop the flow of narcotics, which make up nearly 90% of the global heroin market. Popularity on the home front is on the decline as Karzai is increasingly seen as an American puppet. This is not surprising from a government comprised of warlords, drug traffickers and ex-Taliban. Unable to leave heavily fortified Kabul without an American guard, Karzai is often hailed as the Mayor of Kabul.

Thus, history is repeating itself in Afghanistan, as it is left once again, torn and bleeding amid the selfish ambitions of imperialism. The puppets return, old tricks, new faces. And the suffering continues. However, the sacrifices of the Afghan people through out their history have taught them to be patient, and so they wait. Waiting to be released from the shackles of oppression.



Above: Victims of war and poverty in Afghanistan.

Don't hate the Media-Be the Media!

Independent Media Centers (aka Indymedia or IMC) is a global network of independent journalists and alternative media that is closely linked with the global justice and international solidarity movements. It was set up in 1999 to document the massive people's protests that shut down the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle.

Indymedia was a response to the corporate media's propaganda system and to allow alternative voices to be heard such as Palestinian voices as well as the voice of workers, environmentalists and indigenous people. Indymedia is based on the idea that everyone is a journalist and a witness to history. So start taking back your information sources from the corporate distortion and go independent. www.indymedia.org.nz and www.indymedia.org